



Public Forum

Protecting Your Health

The Bureau of Health Professions

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BUREAU OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS: PROTECTING HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF MICHIGAN CITIZENS

Have you ever wondered what the initials following a health provider's name means? Abbreviations like M.D., D.O., R.N., M.S.W., L.L.P., and many other letter combinations represent a credential that an individual possesses based on education and professional experience. In the case of over 30 health professions in Michigan, titles and letter abbreviations represent a license or registration with the state of Michigan.

The state of Michigan regulates health professions based on state laws that require individuals who want to practice a profession to meet certain standards and report to the state. A specific part of government regulates health professions. This agency is the Bureau of Health Professions, or BHP for short.

As a regulatory agency within the Department of Community Health, the BHP is an umbrella agency of professional licensing and registration boards.

The most important goal of the BHP is for the citizens of Michigan to know that they are receiving high quality care.

Establishing professional standards of care and the enforcement of laws and rules are the foundation of what the BHP does for you. Preventative programs are continually

being developed to help increase the quality of care for Michigan consumers and increase the standards of care that are practiced within Michigan.

The Bureau of Health Professions licenses over 390,000 health professionals each year. Licensing and registration are the most important credential to practicing professionals. A health education or a college degree in a health field is the means by which a person can qualify to be a licensed or registered health provider.

Providers are not legally able to practice without registration or licensure, depending on their individual profession.

For instance, a medical doctor cannot open a private practice

without a license to practice medicine in Michigan. The Board of Medicine regulates medical doctors, and they must meet minimum qualifications established by the board.

To be a medical doctor, an individual is required to have a medical degree from an accredited university, to have practiced with a limited educational medical license under the supervision of a fully licensed doctor, and to have passed certain tests. These qualifications to practice medicine in the State of Michigan are not meant as barriers to keep people from practicing medicine, but as protecting the public's health.



The law, or statute, that governs the practice of all health care professions is called the Michigan Public Health Code. The Code sets most of the state's health care standards. The Code details the regulatory structure and process for the BHP.

The Michigan Public Health Code also requires that a partnership be formed between the Bureau of Health Professions and Professional Boards in order to collaborate in the regulatory process. Each Professional Board has the task of deliberating over and setting the standards for each profession, as well as enforcing those standards. The BHP acts as a support agent as well as a partner in the regulatory process.

The BHP has also taken proactive measures to increase the safety and quality of care that Michigan citizens can expect from their health care providers. Prevention and public awareness are two avenues that the BHP has been focusing on to help improve the way care is administered.

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One proactive policy area that the Bureau is focusing on is sustaining a quality healthcare workforce for Michigan consumers. The BHP is committed to providing health professionals with training, educational opportunities, and educational resources on the modern practice of medical, dental, and mental health care. An example of an effort by the BHP to increase public awareness of health care issues is this newsletter, along with information on the State of Michigan and the Department of Community Health websites.

To prepare for changes in the population and demands of the demographics of Michigan, BHP is addressing workforce development head on. According to many studies, the pool of individuals qualified to administer health care will be much smaller than the need for health professionals in the next ten years.

The BHP and many health agency partners are developing creative solutions to meet this shortage, and are planning for the efficient use of state resources. To minimize the worker shortage that is predicted and maintain access to quality care in Michigan, alternative policies are being considered.

Condensed nursing programs and refresher programs are two examples of workforce enhancement programs. Preparing more



nurses is part of the equation to minimize the workforce shortage.

Policy changes are being considered at both state and local levels to mitigate the impact of health workforce shortages. Solving the problems before they happen is beneficial to the citizens of Michigan, and prevention is also cost-effective in the long run.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH CODE

There are three articles that govern the licensing and regulation of health professionals. Article 1 defines terms used throughout the Public Health Code. Article 7 contains the statutes related to controlled substances. Article 15 defines duties of the Department of Community Health/Bureau of Health Professions, Boards and Task Forces. This section contains 31 parts, one for each health profession or specialty regulated by the Public Health Code.

Article 15 gives the Bureau of Health Professions the authority to regulate health professions in the way that it does. If you would like to find out more about the function of the Bureau of Health Professions, we invite you to our website, www.michigan.gov/healthlicense.



THE PROFESSIONS REGULATED BY THE BUREAU OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

The following professions or health facilities are currently regulated by the BHP. In 2007, acupuncturists, athletic trainers, and dieticians/nutritionists will be added to this list.

1. Audiologist
2. Chiropractor
3. Dentist
4. Dental Hygienist
5. Dental Assistant
6. Marriage and Family Therapist
7. Medical Doctor
8. Respiratory Therapist
9. Licensed Practical Nurse
10. Registered Nurse
11. Nurse Midwife
12. Nurse Anesthetist
13. Nurse Practitioner
14. Optometrist
15. Osteopathic Physician
16. Occupational Therapist
17. Occupational Therapist Assistant
18. Pharmacy
19. Pharmacist
20. Physical Therapist
21. Physician's Assistant
22. Podiatrist
23. Psychologist Masters Level
24. Psychologist Doctoral Level
25. Professional Counselor
26. Sanitarian
27. Social Worker Masters
28. Social Worker Bachelors
29. Social Service Technician
30. Veterinarian
31. Veterinarian Technician

CARING FOR YOU!

PAIN AND SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT

The State of Michigan has a vital interest in your health. Progress within Michigan as a state depends directly on the citizens of Michigan.

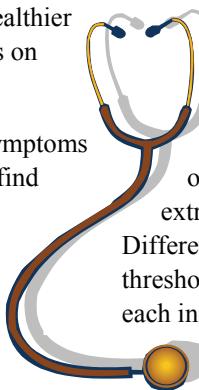
It is important that citizens have the knowledge and tools to manage their well-being.

Each issue of *Public Forum* will feature a Caring for You! column that spotlights a healthful hint that can lead to a healthier lifestyle. Our first issue will focus on pain management.

Freedom from pain and related symptoms is one way that people many can find relief.

If you or someone you love suffers from chronic pain or has experienced acute pain, then you know that living with pain can be damaging to your sense of well being,

and rob a person of the ability to engage in routine activities. Relief from pain is a primary objective in maintaining good health.



Pain is an unpleasant sensory or emotional experience with actual or potential tissue damage. Pain is an extremely individual sensation. Different people have different pain thresholds, so pain is treated differently in each individual circumstance.

No individual should suffer in pain. Experiencing pain can begin to dramatically alter the quality of life an individual is experiencing.

The first step in pain relief is consulting your care provider. They will most likely assess your individual circumstance and prescribe the next step for pain relief. So, talk openly with your provider and take the first step to pain relief.

There may be treatments that can increase your ability to do routine daily activities and most importantly, increase your quality of life.

There are some resources you can explore regarding pain on the BHP website, www.michigan.gov/healthlicense, in the spotlight box titled "Pain Management". The Pain and Symptom Management Advisory Committee was recently reconvened in November of 2006 to continue to explore the Governor's objectives to assist Michigan residents in the management of pain.



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QUESTION & ANSWER CORNER

It is the intention of this section to help consumers have a better understanding of both their rights and the procedures of the Bureau of Health Professions.

Question: How do I file a consumer complaint?

Answer: The Bureau of Health Professions (BHP) distinguishes between *allegations* filed by consumers and formal *complaints* filed by the State.

An *allegation* is a consumer complaint filed with BHP against a licensee or registrant. The consumer alleges that a violation of the Public Health Code has occurred. Typical allegations involve quality of care received, such as misconduct of the licensee or registrant, a scope-of-practice issue, a professional conduct issue, substance abuse issue, and boundary issues.

An *allegation* is the first step in a possible disciplinary action against the licensee or registrant. A *complaint* is filed when the State believes it has enough evidence to proceed with possible disciplinary action.

To file an allegation, contact the allegation section of the Bureau of Health Professions at (517) 373-9196.

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It is the intention of the Advisory Committee to take the next steps in making policy changes and increasing public awareness of the challenge that pain presents to the practice of medicine and the quality of life for patients.

As the committee continues its work, look for updates on the Bureau of Health Professions website (www.michigan.gov/healthlicense).

Healthy You Links :

The following website links are sites that have helpful, healthful information just for you! Check them out and help us continue our healthier Michigan mission

General MI Health Info
www.michigan.gov/mdch/

MI Fitness Initiative MIsteps Up
michiganstepsup.org

Women Infants and Children
www.wichealth.org

Michigan Cancer Initiatives
www.michigancancer.org

Older Adult Information
www.miseniors.net

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This newsletter is a periodic publication of the Department of Community Health/Bureau of Health Professions.

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